

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes,

wherein a space is secured between the electrodes and an inner surface of a casing of the ion elution unit.

2. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 1,
wherein an interval between the electrodes becomes narrower from an upstream side to a downstream side with respect to a water current flowing through an inside of a casing of the ion elution unit.

3. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 2,
wherein terminals that are so laid as to run from the electrodes out of the casing of the ion elution unit are disposed on the upstream side with respect to the water current flowing through the inside of the casing, and a supporting portion for supporting downstream-side parts of the electrodes is formed on the inner surface of the casing.

4. (Currently Amended) The ion elution unit according to claim 2,
wherein a water inflow port and a water outflow port are formed in the casing of the ion elution unit, and the water outflow port is given a smaller ~~larger~~ cross-sectional area than the water inflow port.

5. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 2,
wherein a cross-sectional area of an interior space of the casing gradually decreases from
the upstream side to the downstream side.

6. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 1,
wherein a water inflow port and a water outflow port are formed in the casing of the ion
elution unit, and the water outflow port is located in a lowest position within an interior space of
the casing.

7. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 1,
wherein, of the electrodes, any positive electrode is made of one of silver, copper, zinc, or
silver-copper alloy.

8. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 1,
wherein, of the electrodes, both positive and negative electrodes are made of one of
silver, copper, zinc, or silver-copper alloy.

9. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 8,
wherein polarities of the electrodes are reversed periodically.

10. (Previously Presented) An appliance comprising the ion elution unit according to claim 8, wherein the metal ions generated by the ion elution unit are used by being added to water.

11. (Currently Amended) An appliance comprising the ion elution unit according to claim 9, wherein the metal ions generated by the ion elution unit are used by being added to ~~water~~water.

12. (Previously Presented) The appliance according to claim 10, wherein the appliance is a washing machine.

13. (Previously Presented) The appliance according to claim 11, wherein the appliance is a washing machine.

14. (Previously Presented) An ion elution unit that generates metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes,

wherein terminals that are so laid as to run from the electrodes out of a casing of the ion elution unit are formed in a position inward of ends of the electrodes located on an upstream side with respect to a water current flowing through an inside of the casing.

15. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 14,

wherein the terminals that are so laid as to run out of the casing of the ion elution unit are formed integrally with the electrodes.

16. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 14, wherein the terminals that are so laid as to run from the electrodes out of the casing of the ion elution unit have parts thereof located inside the casing protected with a sleeve made of an insulating material.

17. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 14, wherein the terminals laid from the electrodes are so formed as to penetrate a bottom wall of the casing of the ion elution unit and protrude downward.

18. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 14, wherein, of the electrodes, any positive electrode is made of one of silver, copper, zinc, or silver-copper alloy.

19. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 14, wherein, of the electrodes, both positive and negative electrodes are made of one of silver, copper, zinc, or silver-copper alloy.

20. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to claim 19, wherein polarities of the electrodes are reversed periodically.

21. (Previously Presented) An appliance comprising the ion elution unit according to claim 19, wherein the metal ions generated by the ion elution unit are used by being added to water.

22. (Currently Amended) An appliance comprising the ion elution unit according to claim 20, wherein the metal ions generated by the ion elution unit are used by being added to waterwater.

23. (Previously Presented) The appliance according to claim 21,
wherein the appliance is a washing machine.

24. (Previously Presented) The appliance according to claim 22,
wherein the appliance is a washing machine.